

BLUE SIGNAL PROTECTION OF WORKERS

Blue Signal is one of the most important safety assurances for the railroad worker engaged in the inspection, testing, repair and servicing of rolling equipment. The FRA has developed ~~standards~~ standards deemed essential for protection of these workers. Areas of this regulation that need to be revisited include:

- **Inclusion of Contractors**
Parties that have not traditionally been considered railroads will be affected by this regulation. The craft or job title of an employee and whether an employee is paid by a railroad or by a contractor engaged by a railroad, is irrelevant when the prevention of deaths and injuries is at stake. FRA believes that contractor employees are entitled to the same level of safety as railroad employees and will be equally responsible for compliance with the Blue Signal regulation.
- **Visibility Amendments**
The effectiveness of a blue signal is dependent upon the fact that the device must be clearly distinguishable to the observer. Current regulations are not specific as to a person's location relative to the blue signal and its visibility. These additions will clarify this regulation.
- **One Person Crew**
On March 1, 1995, FRA published an amendment to the final rule on utility employees. The amendment which was to have gone into effect on May 15, 1995, permitted an engineer working alone as a one-person crew to work within the crew exclusion from the blue signal rule with certain restrictions. However, in response to comments and petitions received, FRA suspended the one person crew operation.
- **Locomotive Servicing Area/Car Shop Repair Track**
When certain criteria are present a railroad may safely use different approaches to afford blue signal protection. Greater freedom of movement is affected to the mechanical department personnel once a piece of rolling equipment is placed with this area. A suggestion for consideration in this area is clarifying which locomotives are necessary to be blue flagged.

- **Remotely *Controlled* Switches**

Current regulations do not **specifically refer** to remotely controlled derails which are **primarily** utilized in locomotive servicing **areas**. **FRA** intends that remotely controlled be **treated** in the same manner as remotely controlled switches.

- **Rear End Markers**

In the absence of a caboose at the rear of a freight train, all crew members are now riding the locomotive consist at the front of the train. FRA permits railroads to use personnel other than train crew members to inspect the rear marker device to avoid t&e delay and costs inherent in such a train crew inspection. Non-train crew persons who inspect markers are entitled to blue signal protection. This regulation currently resides under its own Part - 221. FRA intends to establish a new section in Subpart B - Blue Signal Protection of Workers (part 218.28) and remove the current Part 221.16.